

9. Employee Welfare

Employee welfare as a term which is understood to include such services, facilities and amenities as may be established in or in the vicinity of undertakings to enable the persons employed in them to perform their work in healthy, congenial surroundings and to provide them with amenities conducive to good health and high morale.

Welfare helps in keeping the morale and motivation of the employees high so as to retain the employees for longer duration. The welfare measures need not be in monetary terms only but in any kind/forms. Employee welfare includes monitoring of working conditions, creation of industrial harmony through infrastructure for health, industrial relations and insurance against disease, accident and unemployment for the workers and their families.

“ According to International Labour Organization ” labour welfare as a term which is understood to include such services, facilities and amenities as may be established in or in the vicinity of undertakings to enable the persons employed in them to perform their work in healthy, congenial surroundings and to provide them with amenities conducive to good health and high morale.”

According to Todd “employee welfare means anything done for the comfort and improvement, intellectual or social, of the employees over and above the wages paid which is not a necessity of the industry.”

Welfare includes anything that is done for the comfort and improvement of employees and is provided over and above the wages. Welfare helps in keeping the morale and motivation of the employees high so as to retain the employees for longer duration.

The welfare measures need not be in monetary terms only but in any kind/forms. Employee welfare includes monitoring of working conditions, creation of industrial harmony through infrastructure for health, industrial relations and insurance against disease, accident and unemployment for the workers and their families.

Objective of Employee Welfare

- To provide better life and health to the workers.
- To make the workers happy and satisfied.
- To relieve workers from industrial fatigue and to improve intellectual, cultural and material conditions of living of the workers.

Feature of Employee Welfare

- Labor welfare includes various facilities, services and amenities provided to workers for improving their health, efficiency, economic betterment and social status.
- Welfare measures are in addition to regular wages and other economic benefits available to workers due to legal provisions and collective bargaining.
- Labor welfare schemes are flexible and ever-changing. New welfare measures are added to the existing ones from time to time.
- Welfare measures may be introduced by the employers, government, employees or by any social or charitable agency.
- The purpose of labor welfare is to bring about the development of the whole personality of the workers to make a better workforce.

Employee Welfare Agencies

1. Central Government : The central government has made elaborate provisions for the health, safety and welfare under Factories Act 1948, and Mines Act 1952, shipping act 1948, Employees State insurance Act. These acts provide for canteens, crèches, rest rooms, shelters etc.

2. State Government : Government in different states and Union Territories provide welfare facilities to workers. State government prescribes rules for the welfare of the workers and ensures compliance with the provisions under various labor laws.

3. Employers : Employers in India in general looked upon welfare work as fruitless and barren though some of them indeed had done pioneering work. Such as Reliance, TISCO, Godrej etc.

4. Trade Unions : In India, trade unions have done little for the welfare of workers. But few sound and strong unions have been the pioneering in this respect. E.g. The Ahmedabad textiles labor association and the Mazdoor Sabha, Kanpur.

5. Other Agencies : Some philanthropic, charitable social service organizations like : Seva Sadan society Y.M.C.A. etc. are contributing towards employee welfare.

Types of Welfare Facilities

Labour welfare schemes may be statutory, voluntary or mutual

- It is statutory when such activities have to be undertaken in lieu of the legislation given by the government like drinking water facility, giving first aid, electricity etc.
Such as **Sexual Harassment Policy** : To protect an employee from harassments of any kind, guidelines are provided for proper action and also for protecting the aggrieved employee.
- It is voluntary when the activities are undertaken from their own side by the employers, for example providing flexible timing to the employees, providing them with regular health checkup camp etc.
- It is mutual when all parties join hands to bring about the social and economic upliftment of the workers On the basis of location of welfare activities.

Intramural

These are provided within the organization like:

- Canteen
- Rest rooms
- Crèches
- Uniform
- Drinking water
- Washing and bathing facilities
- Provision of safety measures like fencing and covering of machines
- Good layout of machinery and plant
- Fire extinguishers
- Provision of pension, provident fund, fringe benefits etc.

Extramural

These are provided outside the organization such as :

- Housing
- Education
- Child welfare
- Leave travel facilities
- Interest free loans
- Workers cooperative stores
- Vocational guidance etc.

Employee Welfare Officer

Section 49 of the factories act provides that in every factory wherein 500 or more (300 as per The Plantation Act.) workers are ordinarily employed the employer shall appoint at least one welfare officer.

The welfare officer should possess :

- (i) A university degree;
- (ii) Degree or diploma in social service or social work or social welfare from a recognized institution; and
- (iii) Adequate knowledge of the language spoken by the majority of the workers in the area where the factory is situated.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Supervision
- Counseling workers
- Advising management
- Establishing liaison with workers
- Working with management and workers to improve productivity.
- Working with outside public to secure proper enforcement of various acts.

Employee Health

Health and safety of the employees is an important aspect of a company's smooth and successful functioning. It is a decisive factor in organizational effectiveness. It ensures an accident-free industrial environment.

The Constitution of India has also specified provisions for ensuring occupational health and safety for workers in the form of three Articles i.e. 24, 39 (e and f) and 42. The regulation of labour and safety in mines and oil fields is under the Union list. While the welfare of labour including conditions of work, provident funds, employers' invalidity and old age pension and maternity benefit are in the Concurrent list.

The Minister of Labour, Government of India and Labour Departments of the States and Union Territories are responsible for safety and health of workers.

Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) and Directorate General Factory Advice Service and Labour Institute (DGFASLI) assist the Ministry in technical aspects of occupational safety and health in mines and factories and ports sectors, respectively.

Objective of Employee Health

- Promoting inclusion of safety, health and environment, improvement at workplaces as an important component in other relevant national policy documents.
- Including safety and occupational health as an integral part of every operation.
- Continuous reduction in the incidence of work related injuries, fatalities, diseases, disasters and loss of national assets.
- Improved coverage of work related injuries, fatalities and diseases and provide for a more comprehensive data base for facilitating better performance and monitoring.
- Continuous enhancement of community awareness regarding safety, health and environment at workplace related areas.
- Continually increasing community expectation of workplace health and safety standards.
- Improving safety, health and environment at workplace by creation of "green jobs" contributing to sustainable enterprise development.
- Developing and providing required technical manpower and knowledge in the areas of safety, health and environment at workplaces in different sectors.
- Providing a system of incentives to employers and employees to achieve higher health and safety standards.

Industrial Accidents

1. Losses Due to Accidents

(a) Direct Losses : These are the losses to the employer which he pays to the worker for the compensation. Employer also pays for medical expenses incurred on the worker.

(b) Indirect Losses : These losses arise from the following sources:

- Loss of time of the injured person. Loss of time of his fellow workers who stop working at the time of accident to help him or to show sympathy or for curiosity.
- Loss due to damage caused to the machines.
- Loss due to the reduction in the efficiency of the workers when he returns after recovery.

2. Causes of Accidents

(a) Dangerous Machines : These accidents occur from boilers, pressure vessels, prime movers transmission system etc.

(b) Unsafe Physical Conditions : It includes improper guards, improper illumination, improper ventilation, unsafe clothing.

(c) Moving Objects : Sometimes moving object or falling objects causes accidents.

(d) Personal Factors : Sometimes accidents occur due to some personal factors like lack of knowledge, physical weakness.

(e) Exposure to Harmful Substances : Injuries due to accidents are also caused due to exposure to harmful substances like toxic gases, fumes, dust, vapors, mist and aerosols.

The Factories Act, 1948

- It regulates health, safety, welfare and other working conditions of workers in factories.

- It is enforced by the State Governments through their factory inspectorates. The Directorate General Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes (DGFASLI) coordinates matters concerning safety, health and welfare of workers in the factories with the State Governments.
- DGFASLI conducts training, studies and surveys on various aspects relating to safety and health of workers through the Central Labour Institute in Mumbai and three other Regional Labour Institutes located at Kolkata, Chennai and Kanpur.

Mines Act, 1952

- It contains provisions for measures relating to the health, safety and welfare of workers in the coal, metalliferous and oil mines.
- The Mines Act, 1952, prescribed duties of the owner (defined as the proprietor, lessee or an agent) to manage mines and mining operation and the health and safety in mines. It also prescribes the number of working hours in mines, the minimum wage rates, and other related matters.

Dock Workers (Safety, Health and Welfare) Act, 1986

It contains provisions for the health, safety and welfare of workers working in ports/docks and it is administered by Director General Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes, Directorate General FASLI as the Chief Inspector there are inspectorates of dock safety at 10 major ports in India viz. Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Paradip, Kandla, Mormugao, Tuticorin, Cochin and New Mangalore.

National Safety Council of India (NSCI)

The National Safety Council of India (NSCI) was set up to promote safety consciousness among workers to prevent accidents, minimize dangers and mitigate human suffering, arrange programs, lectures and conferences on safety, conduct educational campaigns to arouse consciousness among employers and workers and collect educational and information data, etc.

It has launched new initiatives in three sectors :

- Road Transportation Safety.
- Safety of Health in Construction Sector.
- Safety, Health and Environment in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises(SMEs).
- At the international level, NSCI has developed close collaboration with International Labour Organization (ILO); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); World Bank ; Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC), Bangkok; World Environment Centre (WEC), New York; and the member organizations of Asia Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Organization (APOSFO) of which NSCI is a founder-member.

Awards

In order to encourage occupational health and safety, certain awards have also been instituted by the Government :

- The National Safety Awards for factories and docks, were instituted in 1965, to give recognition to good safety performance on the part of the industrial undertakings and to stimulate and maintain the interest of both management and workers in accident prevention programs.

- The National Safety Awards for mines were instituted in 1983, to give recognition to outstanding safety performances of mines of national-level which comes within the purview of the Mines Act, 1952.
- The Shram Vir Awards, now known as Vishwakarma Rashtriya Puraskar were instituted in 1965. These are meant for workers of factories, mines, plantations and docks and are given to them in recognition of their meritorious performance, which leads to high productivity or economy or higher efficiency.

Policy

Announcement of the National Policy on safety, Health and Environment at work Place was also a step towards improvement in safety, health and environment at workplace performance.

Objectives of the policy were :

- Continuous reduction in incidence of work related injuries, fatalities, diseases, disaster and loss of national assets.
- Continuous reduction in the cost of work place injuries and diseases.
- Extend coverage of work related injuries, fatalities, and diseases for a more comprehensive data base as a means of better performance and monitoring.
- Continuous enhancement of community awareness regarding safety, health and environment at workplace related areas.